B. Claims

The present Amendment has been prepared in accordance with a revised format established by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office as set forth in the O.G. Notice 1267 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 106 of February 25, 2003.

Please amend claim 3 as follows. In accordance with the revised amendment format, a complete listing of all the claims appears below; this listing replaces all earlier amendments and listings of the claims.

1. (Previously Amended) A process of synthesizing N-[N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-α-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester comprising the steps of:

(a) reacting an admixture of N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-aspartic acid and a ketone in a first solvent for a time and at a temperature sufficient to produce an oxazolidinone derivative; and

(b) reacting an admixture of the oxazolidinone derivative and L-phenylalanine or L-phenylalanine methyl ester in a second solvent for a time and at a temperature sufficient to produce N-[N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-α-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester.

2. (Previously Amended) The process according to claim 1, wherein the ketone is selected from the group consisting of hexafluoroacetone, hexachloroacetone, and combinations thereof.

3. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1, wherein the ketone is selected from the group consisting of dimethyl ~~or diethyl~~ acetals of hexafluoroacetone, diethyl acetals of hexafluoroacetone, dimethyl acetals of hexachloroacetone, diethyl acetals of hexachloroacetone, and combinations thereof.

4. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the first solvent is selected from the group consisting of tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether, t-butyl methyl ether, ethyl acetate, dioxane, toluene, butyl acetate, methyl acetate, dichloromethane, dimethylformamide, dimethylsulfoxide and combinations thereof.

5. (Previously Amended) The process according to claim 1, wherein the ratio of N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-aspartic acid to the ketone is from about 1:1 to about 1:4.

6. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the temperature sufficient to produce the oxazolidinone derivative is from about 20°C to about 150°C.

7. (Original) The process according to claim 6, wherein the temperature sufficient to produce the oxazolidinone derivative is from about 22°C to about 70°C.

8. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the time sufficient to produce the oxazolidinone derivative is from about 1 hour to about 48 hours.

9. (Original) The process according to claim 8, wherein the time sufficient to produce the oxazolidinone derivative is from about 12 hours to about 24 hours.

10. (Previously Amended) The process according to claim 1, wherein the admixture of N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-aspartic acid and a ketone further comprises a catalyst.

11. (Previously Amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein the catalyst is p-toluenesulfonic acid.

12. (Previously Amended) The process according to claim 1, wherein the admixture of N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-aspartic acid and a ketone further comprises an acid.

13. (Previously Amended) The process according to claim 12, wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of formic acid, acetic acid, p-toluenesulfonic acid, methane sulfonic acid and combinations thereof.

14. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the second solvent is selected from the group consisting of tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether, t-butyl methyl ether, ethyl acetate, dioxane, toluene, butyl acetate, methyl acetate, dichloromethane, dimethylformamide, dimethylsulfoxide and combinations thereof.

15. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the first solvent and the second solvent are the same.

16. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the ratio of L-phenylalanine or L-phenylalanine methyl ester to the oxazolidinone derivative is from about 1:1 to about 1:2.

17. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the temperature sufficient to produce N-[N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-α-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester is from about 0°C to about 50°C.

18. (Original) The process according to claim 17, wherein the temperature sufficient to produce N-[N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-α-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester is from about 22°C to about 40°C.

19. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the time sufficient to produce N-[N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-α-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester is from about 1 hour to about 48 hours.

20. (Original) The process according to claim 19, wherein the time sufficient to produce N-[N-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-L-α-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester is from about 12 hours to about 24 hours.